



LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1231 - Rise and Shine!



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"Like I would care who your Old Master is! All are equal before the law. Take this fellow away!" Song shi waved his hand impatiently, not giving Sun Qiang an opportunity to speak at all.

Indignant, Sun Qiang wanted to argue, but a sudden surge of power had his cultivation completely sealed, preventing him from speaking a word. Following which, two master teachers stepped forward to have him taken away.

"Wuuuuu!" Sun Qiang was so angry that he could have exploded, but he was still completely helpless before the situation.

He was the butler of the great Yang shi, so how could a mere quasi 8-star master teacher treat him in such a manner? This was insubordination!

"Have those poison masters captured too. Make sure to keep a tight watch over them so that they don't escape!" Paying no heed to the furious fatty, Song shi continuing issuing a series of instructions.

Very soon, with the entire Master Teacher Pavilion mobilized, it did not take long for Elder Xu and the others to be apprehended and imprisoned.

However, despite combing through the entire Qingyuan City, Liu Yang was nowhere to be seen. It was as if he had suddenly vanished from the world; there was not even the slightest trace of him to be found.

...

Several hours earlier, back at the Marshlands of the Northern Meadows, Zhang Xuan was staring at the massive face right before him calmly.

"Well, I have to admit that it's a brilliant idea to have Chu Tianxing invite Liu Yang to the royal palace to hold him hostage so as to threaten me. Just that, I am really curious to know why someone as esteemed as Chu Tianxing would end up pledging loyalty to you?"

In truth, Zhang Xuan was not the only one who was intrigued by this matter. The other master teachers and combat masters were also puzzled by Chu Tianxing's betrayal.

As an emperor of a Conferred Empire, Chu Tianxing was an individual who wielded great authority in his hands. However, the entire basis of his power was built upon humans, so it was counterintuitive for him to betray humanity to side with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

One must know that if the Master Teacher Pavilion uncovered his betrayal, he would be killed on the spot. There would be no mercy whatsoever.

"You want to know why?" Hearing those words, Vicious sneered coldly. "You will have to ask your own Master Teacher Pavilion for that!"

Zhang Xuan frowned but did not say anything.

Vicious harrumphed. "As the monarch of a Conferred Empire, he should have wielded supreme power within his country. No one should have dared disrespect him or question his words. But with the existence of your Master Teacher Pavilion, what has become of his authority as the emperor?"

"Thanks to your Master Teacher Pavilion, he has to always consider how the Master Teacher Pavilion would view a matter before making a decision. No matter what he did, he would never be able to break free from your control, doomed to remain subservient to you lot for life. How could a man as prideful and lofty as him possibly accept this?"

"Making use this opening in his heart, it was not too difficult for me to place him under my control."

"This..." Hearing that, Zhang Xuan fell silent.

In truth, Vicious' words had some truth in them.

To the common populace, the presence of the Master Teacher Pavilion brought about some degree of equality and order, allowing them to live their lives in peace. It was also a platform where they could have their grievances redressed, allowing standing up against the powerful nobles of the country whom they would have been powerless against otherwise.

On the other hand, to those who wielded great power, especially for those who donned the crown, the existence of the Master Teacher Pavilion was a major threat to their authority. No matter what they wanted to do, they had to take how the Master Teacher Pavilion would react into consideration, or else a swift sword might fall upon their heads.

To have to remain subservient to another despite sitting upon the almighty throne... It was inevitable that dissatisfactions would pile up and eventually reach a point where it was no longer repressible.

At this point, Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed.

Chu Tianxing only saw how his power had been curbed, but he failed to see how the Qingyuan Empire could have very well been annexed by other empires or destroyed by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe if not for the Master Teacher Pavilion's protection.

Without a strong foundation, how could an empire possibly survive the test of time?

Despite the various restrictions that the Master Teacher Pavilion would impose on the regional monarchy, there was no doubt that its presence played a crucial role in making the country strong!

Nevertheless, even though Vicious had put it simply, Zhang Xuan knew that the truth was bound to be more complicated than that. Most likely, Chu Tianxing must have gone through some kind of traumatic event that resulted in him steering off the path, eventually causing inner demons to breed within him. Unable to overcome his inner demons, he had no choice but to become the puppet of the Qingtian Emperor and Vicious, heading down a path of no return.

Not wishing to waste his breath any longer, Vicious uttered coldly, "Alright, I have already come to the limit of my patience. I don't want to waste any more time on you. Hurry up and give me your answer, or else I'll ensure that you, your students, and your kin will suffer tragic deaths!"

At the same time, a powerful force suddenly rippled forth from Vicious, leaving Zhang Xuan's group swaying on their feet. It was a threat from Vicious to remind them how powerless they were before him.

"You know, I do care for my students a lot. However, if you think that you can make me betray mankind and submit to the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe just by holding them hostage, you are really taking me too lightly!" Zhang Xuan shook his head as his voice resounded clearly amid the powerful wind.

"As their teacher, I have to conduct myself properly so that I can become a good role model to them. If I surrender to you easily, what kind of message would I be sending to my other students? How could I be qualified to preach to them about principles and values if so? I know that I can't keep them under my wing and protect them forever, so I have worked hard to teach them everything that they might need... and if they are still to

be unable to discern the situation themselves and end up being done in, I can only say that it isn't meant to be."

As much as Zhang Xuan did not want to see anything happen to his students, as a teacher, he knew that he could not possibly protect them for life. More importantly, he understood the respect and admiration that his students had for him, and he was not oblivious to the immense influence that he had on them.

For this very reason, he could not bend his principles and values even for their sake, or else he would be sending the wrong message to them, possibly leading them down the wrong path.

Often, the consequences of a decision were ambiguous. It was easy to look back retrospectively to say what could have been better done, but it was not as easy when one was put into the same position, looking upon an uncertain future.

Nevertheless, there were still some things that one should do and one should never do.

Principles and values were what set humans apart from beasts, so those were things one should never compromise!

This was what Zhang Xuan deeply believed in, and he felt that it was something that all master teachers should persist in as well.

"Is that your answer? Very well. Since you have made up your mind, you can die now!"

Looking at the resolve in the young man's eyes, Vicious knew that there was nothing he could say or do that would sway the other party. Thus, he decided not to waste his breath anymore.

Boom!

An overwhelming might rippled forth from Vicious, crashing down upon the group like a tsunami. Standing at the very front of the group, Wu shi and Hall Master Xing hurriedly drove their zhenqi furiously to reinforce the barrier they had put up to protect the others. However, under the immense pressure, it did not take long for their faces to redden, and fresh blood spurted from their mouths.

The disparity in strength was simply too great! They did not stand a chance at all.

Gritting his teeth furiously to persist even a second longer, Wu shi bellowed desperately, "Principal Zhang, hurry up and leave!"

"There's no need for that." A soft chuckle escaped from Zhang Xuan's mouth. "I know that he's biding his time, but who's to say that I'm not doing the same?"

Raising his head, he gazed at the massive face before him and asked, "Do you think that you have won?"

"What do you mean?" Realizing that the young man's eyes were calm, devoid of worry or fear, Vicious' eyebrows shot up. An ominous feeling sprouted within him.

He quickly looked back at everything that had happened, but he was certain that he hadn't left any opportunity for the young man to turn the tables on him.

"What do I mean? Isn't the meaning obvious? Just like how you were stalling time to gain control over the little island, I was playing along with you to buy some time as well," Zhang Xuan replied with composure.

Were it not to stall for time, even if he had many questions in his mind, he would not have bothered to talk so much at this critical moment!

"You were buying time, too? Don't bother putting on a front before me; it's meaningless. We both know that there's nothing else you can do in this situation!" Vicious replied coldly.

The Qingtian Emperor had engaged countless celestial designers and blacksmiths and devoted countless precious resources in order to forge this head. While taking control of it had only granted him a cultivation realm of Leaving Aperture realm pinnacle, in terms of true fighting prowess, he could match even an average Grand Dominion realm ¹ expert easily!

Of the cultivators before him, the two strongest ones were only at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage. On the other hand, while Zhang Xuan possessed strength far beyond his current cultivation realm, he was only barely able to match the Leaving Aperture realm advanced stage Qingtian Emperor even when he utilized all the means in his possession.

The disparity in strength was not something that could be breached in a moment no matter how much time Zhang Xuan bought!

The only fate possible for them was death!

"Why would I bother putting up a front before you at this moment? Alright, since it has come to this, it's time for me to show my hand as well. Haven't you rested long enough now? It's time to do your work!" Zhang Xuan's voice echoed in the surroundings with a unique melody to it.

Surprised by Zhang Xuan's words, Hall Master Xing and the others quickly looked around them, but beneath the starry night sky, there was not a figure to be seen.

"I was wondering what kind of formidable ally you could have prepared on your side. It seems like it's just a mere front after all!" Vicious sneered coldly.

Previously, that fellow had used this method once against the Qingtian Emperor, resulting in the impaling of the latter's bottom. If that fellow thought that the same trick could work twice, he was dreaming!

If the other party really had an ally hidden in the shadows, he would have gotten them to appear long ago. There was no reason to have waited so long!

"I have had enough of your farce. Let's end it once and for all!" Harrumphed coldly, a compelling might far stronger than the previous ones rippled from Vicious, swiftly crushing its way down upon the group.

However, before the might could reach them, the massive head in the air suddenly staggered.

Following which, as if the little island had gone out of control, it began trembling non-stop.

"What is going on? How can I possibly lose control over this head?" Vicious widened his eyes in horror. He shot his glance down upon Zhang Xuan and screeched, "You! It can only be you! Speak, what did you do to my head?"

"It's nothing much, really. All I did was to enchant the little island!" Zhang Xuan replied with a casual smile.

Back when he was at the bottommost level of the little island, he had used the Library of Heaven's Path to check on the surrounding walls.

Perhaps it was because he was at the very center of the little island, but he astonishingly found out that the entire island was actually a massive man-made structure, forming a gigantic entity by itself.

Upon realizing that, he swiftly recalled what he had seen upon stepping on the Ghost Cavern and mentally traced the path he had walked. Once a full picture was formed in his mind, he immediately realized what was going on.

Thus, he spent two hours in the underground cavern secretly enchanting the entire little island.

His movements were very discreet, and Vicious' will was still trapped in the altar back then. As such, the latter had failed to realize what he was doing.

After which, he released Vicious and allowed the latter to take control of the little island.

From the start to the end, Zhang Xuan knew that Vicious was intentionally stalling for time, but he was more than happy to grant the latter all the time he wanted. After all, the more deeply fused Vicious was with the little island, the more intricately attached he would be with the dormant spirit that he had enchanted into it.

Before Vicious knew it, there would already be two consciousness within him. Just like the situations with Hall Master Xing and Zhang Jiuxiao back then, he would be forced into a tough battle for supremacy with the spirit.

"Enchant? You are telling me that you enchanted my entire head?" Vicious shrieked in disbelief.

He was aware of the spirit awakener occupation, but even 9-star spirit awakeners were only capable of enchanting spirits into stronger and larger artifacts. Furthermore, each enchantment would exhaust them greatly, and they would have a long downtime after each enchantment session.

On the other hand, the head that was forged for him was roughly six li² in diameter. How many times would one have to enchant the head in order to produce enough sparks to bestow it with a spirit?

Was it even humanly possible?

"It seems like the Qingtian Emperor has neglected to tell you about how I managed to enchant the building of the Spirit Awakener Guild," Zhang Xuan scoffed.

Due to the previous incident, he had been afraid that Vicious might have noticed his plan in advance and guarded against the spirit. However, from the looks of it, it seemed like the latter was oblivious to it as well!

While the Qingtian Emperor and Vicious appeared to be close allies on the surface, they had been trading blows with one another beneath calm waters. Information asymmetry³ could often prove to be a powerful weapon in crucial circumstances, so there was no way the Qingtian Emperor would have told Vicious everything he knew!

This worked to Zhang Xuan's advantage. Completely unguarded against his abnormal capability in spirit enchantment, Vicious could not have anticipated such a move.

Otherwise, Zhang Xuan would not have succeeded so easily.

"Humph, so what if you have managed to enchant my head? It makes no difference to the situation at all! I'll still be able to kill all of you easily!" Roaring furiously, Vicious forcefully wrestled control over the head from the spirit and maneuvered the head to kill the young man before him.

However, the young man simply shook his head with a derisive smile before uttering softly, "Rise and shine, spirits!"

Boom!

Right after those words were spoken, it was as if spring had sprung upon the face-shaped little island. In the blink of an eye, countless plants sprouted out.

Cactus, green foxtail, and flowers of all shapes and sizes... They densely covered every inch of land on the little island.

"Ahhh!"

Under the forceful intervention from the spirit, Vicious' consciousness began descending into chaos. As if two personas struggling for supremacy, he began to lose control over his own strength.

"This..."

Watching the inconceivable drama unfold before their eyes, Wu shi, Hall Master Xing, and the others could not help but gulp in fear.

All along, spirit awakers had been a synonym for 'weakness', playing nothing more than an auxiliary role to other cultivators. Who would have thought that their aptitude could actually be used in such a way?

Under normal circumstances, it would have been impossible for them to defeat this Otherworldly Demon. Yet, just by enchanting a spirit into the other party's head, Zhang Xuan had actually managed to send the other party into a state of disorientation, effectively incapacitating the other party.

While struggling with the spirit within him, Vicious roared furiously, "Do you think that a mere spirit you have enchanted into my head will be able to defeat me? Dream on! Once I get rid of this spirit, it'll be your doomsday next!"

Zhang Xuan's capability in spirit enchantment was unnatural, but Vicious' proficiency in soul arts was no joke either. At the very most, the spirit would only prevent Vicious from controlling the island and place his consciousness into a state of disorientation temporarily. With just some time, there was no doubt that Vicious would be able to eradicate the spirit.

"I have no doubt that you have the ability to kill the spirit I have enchanted into your head. However..." Zhang Xuan shook his head before continuing. "It will be too late then."

Hu!

A book materialized in Zhang Xuan's palm. Vaguely, one could see a finger and a heart imprinted on it.

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